

BIOGRAPHY  
OF  
SAMUEL CORDNER  
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF 1910, COPIED 1975

Samuel Cordner born September 16, 1876, at Provo City, Utah. Seventh in line of a family of nine children. Father and Mother were born and reared in Ireland, married September 10, 1862. After five children had been born my parents emigrated to Utah in year 1872, arriving in Salt Lake City some time in January 1873, the in July 1873 they moved to Provo city.

I was born in a little one room adobe house on the south side of Provo City, the house belonged to the rail road Company. My father worked as a section hand for a short time, then he worked in Woolen Mills, but he had never been used to working, as he often said, "Under a boss," and did not stick to this kind of work very long, for as soon as he could save a small amount of money, he began to plan for something better. So, in year 1879 during the month of March, the family moved five miles north of Provo and homesteaded a quarter section of land.

The country we moved into now is covered with sage brush, no house, very little water to irrigate the soil, canals must be built, land must be cleared of brush, plowed and planted. Can we even at this time imagine the toil and trials that must be met with in order to build a home and at the same time earn a living and all to be done by a family that were unaccustomed to handling horses, oxen, plows and machinery, and there being only three or four homesteads in an area of country about seven miles wide by eleven miles long.

While moving the furniture with a mule team from Provo to the ranch my brother John was feeding the mules some corn while hitched to the wagon and I just large enough to hit them with a willow started them to run and two wheels of the wagon passed over his head which came near causing his death, but after many days nursing he recovered. This accident at this particular time caused a lot of trouble for the new emigrants.

I do not remember many things that happened in those trying times, being young, but have listened to father, mother, and the older members tell of how they hauled wood and lumber from the canyon, planted fruit trees and berries and a lot of work that was done at a profit.

Then comes the time when I can remember things that happened. I remember my father marketing the berries, threshing beans and peas with a flail, making molasses from sugar can, how the cattle commenced to be more numerous on the farm and how us small boys herded the cows and sheep while the older ones helped father plow, cultivate and harvest the corn and hay and other crops. Then there were berries to be picked and us

small boys used to assist in picking the berries being directed in this work by our sister, who was the fastest berry picker I ever knew.

In this sort of work the family became quite well to do and I think we were the first to make a success of raising fruit for the market in this locality. There is one thing that I have missed very bad and that is a school education. When a boy we had to go a long way to school and the school was not so good as we have now. I remember the little log school house, one room, that one teacher had all the grades, and I well remember how I did hated to be shut up in that room. It seems that I wanted to be out in the open air--would sooner take the gun and go hunting ducks on the river. Had been raised on the frontier and learned to love nature, to ride the bronco and such pastime as did not bring that learning that would of been a wonderful help to me now.

My father during the winter nights used to act as teacher and taught us how to read and write, spell, and some mathematics, and this way succeeded in getting us somewhat interested in school, and persuaded us to attend some. I started to attend some when eleven years old, then had a very sick spell that stopped me from going for that season, then tried it again the following winter, being twelve years old, and attended a few months each winter till I was eighteen, then I quit school entirely having finished the eighth grade. My father tried to persuade me to go a higher school the next year, but while I had become somewhat interested in school I felt it would be asking too much of him to pay the price, so I told him I would try to get through some way and teach myself.

There is one thing that my parents always taught me and that was to be honest and deal fair with those whom I might trade with in this life. They taught me to attend Sabbath school and honor the Sabbath day. To be thrifty and make conditions better for neighbors and friends. All of these things have been a wonderful lot of good to me in my life so far.

I was baptized when eight years old, by Franklin Carter and confirmed a member the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by S. N. Skinner. I was ordained a deacon when twelve years old by ----- then when about fifteen was ordained a teacher by J. A. Loveless, Sr. I never was ordained a priest, but was ordained an elder March 1900, by bishop P. M. Wentz when I was twenty-three years old--my brother Robert assisting him.

I worked at home on the farm with my father till spring of 1900, having been taught by him never to work for any one, but to have something of my own and make myself a job. For three years previous to 1900, he gave the privilege of working during summer months for myself, but was to assist in planting and harvesting crops on the farm in spring and fall. I worked this way as stated for three years, having bought a team and wagon, which I used to haul fruit and vegetables to market, buying a great deal of the produce from father, and this way helping him get rid of his crop of fruit, I having the profit thus gained. I made considerable money in this way and saving more than I would had I done

as some of the boys I knew done, work for someone by the day. Then there was something I rather liked about this kind of work, I was my own boss and was continually becoming acquainted with people and business men of the country.

There is one thing I wish to mention that happened in our family that I have to written about and that is the death of my brother John. While riding a race horse on the county road April 17, 1891, he was thrown against a telephone pole and killed. This brought a gloom over the whole family, and especially my mother mourned for many years. John was seventeen years old and a big strong boy--it was a sad affair for all of us.

In the fall of 1898 I bought about ten acres of sage brush land and water stock for same, father offered to give ten acres of the old homestead, but I told him I wanted to try myself to see if I could make a start for myself, and after having tried he could give me what he felt like after a few years. During winter of 1898 and spring of 1899, I cleared this piece of land and planted part to fruit trees and the rest of it to grain--father assisted me some in planting. I also built a brick house during fall and winter of 1899 and 1900.

March 14, 1900, in company with Elizabeth Earl, I went to Salt Lake City and we were married, returning home the next day, and on the following day moved into our own house. There was no barn for the horses, no hay, no wood, no coal, no furniture, only the little house and that was empty. My credit was good, and while the new bride scrubbed the floors and windows I drove to town and bought a load of furniture, then bought a load of hay and chopped some sage brush to make a fire and thus commenced our married life.

I worked hard and planted some potatoes, wheat, strawberries, raspberries and built sheds for horses and improved the little place in a general way. We bought a cow that was very little good, then traded her for a very good one. We managed to take care of the farm and keep the fruit wagon going all summer and most of winter 1900-1901.

December 13, 1900, Vida Pearl, our first baby was born.

Sometime during summer of 1901, we bought four and one half acres of land that joined our little place from W. J. Cordner, cleaned brush off during winter and planted to apple trees and alfalfa in spring.

Dug a cellar 14 X 7 ft. deep this season also, and built a brick granary and store room and cellar combined, which came in very handy to store vegetables and grain in. I done this work including mason work myself as cash was not very plentiful.

Winter of 1901 & 1902, we had plenty to live on and had made quite a little start in financial way.

During spring of 1903, in company of N. J. Knight and Erastus Kofford, built a canning

factory and during summer we canned considerable fruit and tomatoes. This business paid some good dividends for several years, we incorporated and enlarged the business and buildings and bought a factory that was built at Provo and operated both plants for several years and run a thrifty business. I finally sold my stock amounting to some \$3000.00 to Jessie Knight and quit the canning business, receiving all the cash I had paid for stock and moving out of the business with no losses.

In spring of 1901, May 18, my father was killed while driving from Provo, home. He was driving a horse and buggy and the animal was frightened by something and jumped over an embankment, killing my father, while mother escaped with slight injuries.

In fall of 1904 we bought 10 acres of land and 3 shares water stock from Mrs. Roda Daw, this joined our place on the east and made us quite a good sized farm for fruit. We increased the cattle some in number and planted more fruit trees. We had to hire quite a lot of help the past summer to pick berries and farm work in general.

July 31, 1905, the second child, Violet Gertrude, was born.

I continue to operate the fruit wagon, and business is picking up nicely. Years 1906 & 1907 general farm work and hauling produce continue to do very well in a financial way, and do some work along church lines especially in elders quorum, which I get a great deal of satisfaction from.

In 1907 we built a barn worth about \$500.00, hauling most of the timbers from the canyon.

During spring of 1906 bought 20 acres land and 40 shares Blue Cliffs canal stock from R. M. Rogers estate. I got this land and water quite cheap, paying \$4.00 per acre and \$3.00 per share for the water stock. The land is situated near Mount Timpanogos and was sage brush land, I plowed and planted to alfalfa and grain and reaped a very good crop. Spring of 1907 bought 20 acres land and 4 1/3 shares water stock (Provo Bench Canal) from Dr. James Talmage, paying \$1500.00 for this place. Planted about 4 acres to peach trees. I found a lot of hard work in cleaning up these two places, but made them pay expenses and some dividends on money invested.

In spring 1908 in company with several we bought 45 acres land with good water rights from Mr. Barton, known as the old Roberts farm near mouth of Provo Canyon, paying \$300.00 for this place. The purpose in buying here was to transfer water into Provo Bench Canal to water lands on the bench. We had done quite a lot of prospecting for water by digging wells but failed in this, I did not keep either of the last three places long, but in course of two to three years sold them, realizing quite a good profit for each one.

March 19, 1909, Vera Elva was born, our third girl.

During 1909 we built an add-on to the house, costing about \$4000.00, this made us plenty

of house room.

I dug a well and set up a wind mill and with a large tank in the attic of house arranged a very neat water system and made it very convenient along this line. This was the first water system of this kind in the neighborhood. It proved a success and quite a number built similar systems.

Years 1909 and 1910, I done considerable trading in real-estate, buying several places and selling them right away. Realizing a good profit along this line--and making some good money with the fruit business on the wagon.

Spring of 1910 I bought 8 1/2 acres land and 3 shares Provo Bench Canal Stock from J. J. Knight for \$3400.00, this piece joined our place on the north making 32 1/2 acres in all, quite a nice little farm, with a very good water right.

July 2, 1911, Thomas Earl was born, this is the first boy in the family and we were all delighted over the big boy.

I have been interested in the canning business for a number of years. Commencing in 1903, in company with J. J. Knight & John S. Park, we built a small factory near our place and canned fruit and tomatoes to quite an extent, and made a profitable business out of this industry, and furnished labor for hundreds of boys and girls. After operating for several years as a partnership we incorporated, sold some stock, bought the old Provo Canning Factory, which had been run by Provo men, Mr. Bedford as manager. Two years after this deal I sold my stock in company, receiving par value and quit the canning business in spring of 1910. This was quite a relief to me, for while the business paid fair dividends, I had too much work to do, and could see if the canning business did not have a lot of attention it would fail, which it did some two years after I sold out.

The year 1912 was a very successful one financially. We had some very good crops and good prices. Our health has been good and we have all been able to work. During the last ten years have had some failures in crops, some seasons the price of fruit was low, but have done very nicely--taken all together. I have branched out and tried many ways and things along business line, but managed to stick to the farm and build to it till our place is counted equal with some of the best fruit farms in this part.

December 26, 1912, I received a call to go on mission to Southern States and to report at Salt Lake City. February 25, 1913, I answered that I would be on hand that date and commenced to arrange my affairs so as to hang on to farm, leave family comfortable &c. January 1, 1913, rented farm to Alf Aston for two years. He to live in part of our house, use horses & implements that belonged to us, and receive one half of all produce, work to be done under our direction. I repaired the barn and many small jobs done, arranged business affairs as best I could to last for two years. February 17, the people in the ward gave me a fairwell and presented me with a purse of \$41.83 and wished me success in my labors. The house was well filled, lots of young people and the party was a good one that I will always remember. The next evening some of the

neighbors surprised us and we had a good time together. Monday, February 24, 1913, I left home in a snow storm to go to Salt Lake City, Mr. Aston took me in buggy to Pleasant Grove and I took the train for Salt Lake, arrived and stopped at Mrs. James Hagues all night.

BIOGRAPHY  
OF  
SAMUEL CORDNER  
WRITTEN BY GERTRUDE CORDNER BACKUS

Dad wrote history up until he went on his mission and he always kept a diary, but I will try and write, and finish a few things that I have heard him tell about and that has taken place during the years.

Mrs. James Hague, Aunt Sarah, was Mom's mother's sister, where Dad stayed overnight. In the morning he was set apart for his mission to the southern states, and left on the train to go there. Those days that mission took in all of the southern states. Now days it is divided into several different missions. In those days the missionaries went without purse, or script and depended on finding a family who would let them stay overnight and give them food.

Dad had many spiritual experiences. He loved the people. Many times as they stayed with a family and be sitting in front of the fireplace, which was half the width of the room in which a large log could be placed in, with members of the family sitting behind them. A spurt of tobacco juice would go over their shoulder and into the fire place. One time a couple of elders failed to find a family who would take them in. The grass was high and they mashed a space down where they could sleep. In the morning they stepped out in the grass and it was soaking wet with the dew, but where they had slept it was nice and dry.

Mobs were bad. Many times when they were out tracking they would see men following them, stepping in door ways, or back of a tree, or some place out of sight, watching the elders. It was dangerous for them and they would leave that location. Sometimes members would hide the elders from the mob.

They held street meetings to help get contacts. They would select a likely corner and begin to sing several songs then preach until a crowd would gather that they could talk to. Sometimes everything went fine, other times trouble makers would drive them away. No matter what the weather they kept on. One Catholic minister told Dad he was going to kill him. Another time when he was baptizing a heavy set lady, he tipped over a log and fell under the water. He wrote in his diary, July 13, 1913, "I long to be home with the kids." He sent many cards home to each of us. I have a book full of some he sent to me. He was a good dad, and we had a good mother, too.

He worked in the office for some time with President Callas. He was acquainted with most all of the elders and worked with them, and visited with some after he came home. Lou Parcell lived in Wallsburg. Our families visited often. He walked many miles in that two years. Sometimes took a bath or would wash his feet in the river.

Through his life Dad had many spiritual experiences, and was a spiritual person. He believed in a here after and in dreams, and he impressed these things on his family.

Soon after Mom and Dad were married--one evening they were working on the yard and getting ready to get the lawn in--a man came by and asked them for a place to stay. He wore a long black coat and a black stovepipe hat. They visited a few minutes then he was told they were just getting settled and didn't have the room, but he might be able to stay at one of the neighbors, Newell Knight, or Henry Downs, both a short distance away. In a few seconds they looked for the stranger, but he was no where to be seen, and in the asking, the neighbors had not seen anyone like him. From that time on through their lives no one was ever turned away without food or lodging, and there was many through the years, who came for help. They firmly believed that he was one of the three Nephites.

Another experience was when Dad was going out with a load of fruit--he sold fruit up through Wasatch County for many years. The road was different then than it is now. It took off south of where the Murdock Dam now is, on the Pole Canyon road, up over the hill and came out up by Spring Dell, it was a real steep climb on the way up. On this steep dugway the reach on Dad's wagon broke, and he was stuck. He walked around the wagon, and in front of the horses several times. He looked on the road and hillside to see if he could find a wire, or something to fasten it up with, but nothing could he find. He walked around in front of the team again, and there circled around, lying in front of them, was a chain. Dad fixed the wagon and went on his way, and he felt sure that his father, who had passed away some years before, had brought the chain to him. He was there on the hill alone, no one else anywhere around that could have brought the chain. I am sure he was saying a little prayer for help.

One time someone stole a calf from the Folks. Along the route where Dad sold fruit, lived a lady he knew quite well, and she could read tea leaves and peep stones. He went to visit her about it. She told him where the calf was--described the person who took it, and said it was tied out back of his barn. Dad went there and got the calf.

The neighbors were few and far between in those days, and they depended on, and helped one another. If someone needed help Mom and Dad were there to help out, with hot chicken soup or other food, or whatever was needed. Rube and Mamie Crandall Pyne lived at about 600 East Center, by the canal. Center Street wasn't even thought of at that time. One night their barn caught on fire. No one knew what started it, but it was a terrible fire. They couldn't get some of the animals out, and they were burned.

During those years many families from Wasatch County would come to Provo Bench (now Orem) to get fruit and would bring barn timbers and cedar posts to trade for the fruit. So, generally the Folks would have these things on hand for use. So, when the barn burned down Dad took several of the barn timbers, and other materials and a cow, and gave it to Rube and Mamie, and helped him with building his barn. The Folks were always ready and willing to do what they could to help others.

During the influenza epidemic in 1919 or 1920 [1918], Dad was in the bishopric and spent many days and nights at members homes helping the sick. Most everyone had the dreaded



sickness. There was a lot of families who lost loved ones. Mom was sick and under the doctors care for several weeks. The ward was under quarantine for some time until the epidemic was past. There was some sad times during that time. There wasn't the medicine then that we have now to take care of a lot of the sickness. Doctors worked day and night to care for sick people.

During the 1930's were bad depression years. Water was low, long hours were put in to get the farm land irrigated. There was fruit and vegetables raised, but there was no money and workers were generally paid in fruit and produce. Many families moved in together to save on expenses. It was hard on everyone.

Dad held many positions in the church and the town. November 18, 1917, he was set apart as counselor in the bishopric. He worked on the genealogical committee, and in the ward, and he and Mom did a lot of research for their families, and did temple work. Many cars full of members were taken with them.

March 1922, Dad was on the Farm Bureau Committee. In August he was chosen as a delegate to the State Legislature from the Farm Bureau, then elected President of the Farm Bureau. January 1923, he and Mom with children, Bud (Earl) and Fontella, left for a trip to Florida. They visited with friends and missionaries there, and had an enjoyable time. Later Dad built a home for a neighbor, Fern Kirkwood, who needed help. The folks helped their children get land and build homes as they came along and were married. It was all hard work.

Dad was successful in raising fruit and vegetables and regular farming of all kinds. In May 1923, he assisted in forming a company to ship fruit. It was called The Federated Fruit and Vegetable Company of U.S.A., until it was later named, The Timpanogos Fruit Company. Dad was made Vice President of the company. Many car and truck loads of fruit and vegetables were shipped to several western states, which helped the selling of fruit and land.

A little joke about Dad. He worked hard in the fields picking fruit, hoeing weeds, in the hay or grain, whatever work had to be done. Sometimes he would get into an ant bed and get ants on him, then you would see him behind a tree, or whatever was close, with his pants down getting the ants off of him. Many of the helpers and children got a big laugh out of this. Mom and Dad worked hard and taught their family to do the same.

Orem City was incorporated in 1919 and water was piped in. In 1948, the Mountain Fuel Gas Company put pipes on both sides of the highway (state Street) in Orem and the homes could be heated.

The winter of 1948 and 1949 were bad. So much snow and cold weather and wind. Cattle and sheep on the ranges were starving. Road machinery were clearing the roads and hauling the snow and dumping it in piles on vacant lots. It stormed so much airplanes and machinery were hauling and dropping hay to the cattle on the ranges, to try and keep them from starving. It was a long hard winter.

If ever Dad had a dream about being at his old home, folks home where he was raised on 2nd south and about 11th East, near the brow of the hill in Orem, he paid attention to the dream. On the west side of the home was two large ditches of water. One night he dreamed he was there and on horse back. He saw a large white bundle going down one of the streams, so he followed as fast as he could, but he couldn't catch up with it. As he came nearer the fence on 4th south the water had gone and just sloppy mud in the ditch. Two men stood by the fence--he didn't know them, and had never seen them before.

Soon after Mom got sick, and was taken to the American Fork Hospital, two doctors came in, they were the two men Dad had seen by the fence. The two Doctor Richards' were the doctors who took care of Mom. She was operated on the 21st of October 1948. She came home on the 1st of November, and died on the 6th of March 1949. As I said before, Dad believed in dreams and had many spiritual experiences.

Grandmother [Mary Ann Benson] Cordner, Dad's mother, lived with us after Grandfather was killed, for several years. She was a small little lady, and a pleasant, helpful, sweet little person to have with us. She visited her other families, but made her home with us for many years. She would tell us stories of Ireland, and she made the best milk gravy--I wish I could make it taste like she did. She loved her little cup of tea. She died September 23, 1920. Unhappy day.

The folks made many trips to California. During the winter months they would go and stay several weeks. They would take some of their friends, or a member of their family and their children. They had some exciting experiences many times. Dad would take care of some business. He visited Mr. Hart, a broker in Los Angeles, and arrange for some selling of farmer's fruit or vegetables from here. Some times they would just take a couple of grandchildren with them--the kids enjoyed the trip always. One year they had Vida and her children with them. Mom always liked to visit little shops there in Long Beach. She worked on hand work, crocheting and embroidery, and visited with friends. One morning they got up and Dad said, "Get ready we are leaving here." Mom and Vida had things they had planned to do and didn't want to leave, but Dad insisted that they go on over to San Bernardino. So, they left as soon as they could get ready. They got to San Bernardino in the early evening and was getting settled at the motel when the earth began to shake and rock. There was a terrible earth quake in Long Beach. Many buildings were destroyed and a lot of damage done. If they hadn't listened to the promptings Dad received, they would have been in trouble. Many such things took place in his life.

After Mom passed away, it was really hard on Dad. He was so lonesome, but kept on. Some years later he went on a tour to Hawaii with several friends--he enjoyed the trip. He spent time with his families and grandchildren. He sold most of his land, but still kept and lived in his home. It was a special home, where they had raised their family. Many beautiful loving times were spent there. Some of Vida's and Fontella's children stayed with him most of the time.

In 1957 Dad had a bad stroke and was never really well after that. But, he took care of the land he had, and the yard and flower garden. He had more little strokes that really affected his

health--he was so sick. Dad was always happy and so grateful whenever any friends or family visited him. He passed away on the 12th of October 1960. I know he is happy now with Mom and other members of his family.

Vida died the 12th of September 1935.

Fontella on the 9th of December 1952.

Earl on the 27th of August, 1972.

Two daughter are left: Gertrude and Vera Elva (Ted).

HISTORY WRITTEN BY SAMUEL CORDNER  
FOR  
THE UTAH DAUGHTERS OF PIONEERS

I was born in Provo on the 16th day of September 1876. In a little one room adobe shack, owned by the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

Two years later in 1878, my parents and family moved onto Provo Bench. When I was very young, I drove the team into Provo with a load of fruit, while mother peddled it. We were always taught to work for ourselves and be our own boss.

The family soon accumulated several cows and some horses. We boys with the neighbor boys herded them. One day while setting in the shade of a tree, by the side of a small ditch, I told the other boys, "When I grow up I'm going to buy this property"--and I did. When I was twenty-one and opportunity came along and N. J. Knight and I bought a considerable patch of land on the east side of the highway where I still live.

Then following Fathers training, I got work on the land. A small house was built on the land I had picked out when twelve years old.

At that time you could count all the families living on the bench on one hand. These families had small places homsteading, but lived in Provo during the winter.

The Cordners wouldn't be considered the first pioneers in Utah, but first pioneers in what is Orem today.

On March 15, 1900, I married Elizabeth Earl in the Salt Lake Temple. Two days later we moved to our home, taking all our possessions in two wash tubs. While she cleaned up the house I went and bargained with Wm. Partridge to buy one bedroom set and one kitchen set, and bought some hay. We had a team and one cow. Later, I built a shed and a lean to on the back of the house.

I had done some hauling of fruit into the mining camp so I continued on with this whenever possible.

I helped build the first canning factory in Utah County. After a few years the cannery was done away with and I helped build the Pleasant Grove Canning Company.

I was the organizer of the Timpanogos Marketing Association, which was successful during the depression.

As far as religion is concerned the Cordner family learned early in life that a little religion is good.

I always figured the Church is similar to the state. The state cannot get along without taxes and the Church cannot get along without tithing. I have had my name in the tithing roll since I was twenty years old.

When I was a small kid I stood on the scaffold and caught adobe brick from men on the ground while masons built the Timpanogos Church house.

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Histories of Samuel Cordner, transcribed by Anna Jean Duncan Backus, wife of Earl Eugene Backus, son of Gertrude Cordner Backus, August 23, 1995. Copied as written, with minor corrections.

# THOMAS AND MARY ANN BENSON CORDNER FAMILY

<u>PARENTS</u>	<u>BORN</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DIED</u>
Thomas Cordner	11/24/1836	Lurgan, Ireland	05/18/1901 PVO
Mary Ann Benson	09/23/1838	Lisburn, Ireland	09/23/1920 PVO
<u>CHILDREN</u>			
Thomas Cordner	12/06/1863	Armaugh, Ireland	03/28/1870 Kilrush
Mary Cordner	01/05/1866	Belfast, Ireland	04/29/1912 PVO
Robert Cordner	02/21/1869	Lisburn, Ireland	01/11/1928 PVO
William James "	02/23/1871	Lisburn, Ireland	05/20/1950 PVO
Steven Caster "	01/28/1872	Lisburn, Ireland	01/10/1873 SLK
John Cordner	09/22/1874	Provo, Utah	04/19/1892 PVO
Samuel Cordner	09/16/1876	Provo, Utah	10/12/1960 PVO
Alexander Cordner	03/17/1878	Provo Bench, Utah	02/11/1929 PVO
Aurthur Benson "	02/21/1880	Provo, Utah	10/12/1941 PVO

## Remembering of Orem

### When water was a luxury and rabbits rained supreme.

While we are looking at present day accomplishment in this territory, it is interesting to look at what it used to be. Progress often cannot be seen unless one looks at a subject over a period of time.

Picture Orem about the year 1860. An almost desert country. Its chief vegetation, sage brush. Its most numerous and prosperous inhabitants jackrabbits. Its water supply practically nil. If you wanted a drink or a bath, you hooked up Dobbin to the white-top and drove to one of the only two water sources at hand, Utah lake or the spring below the second dugway into Provo. Farming was all dry farming and very unsatisfactory.

Homes were mostly homesteaded but land could be bought for \$1.25 an acre. Houses were partial shelters from the elements and that is all that can be said in their favor. People's diet had two primary articles, carp from the lake and jackrabbits.

### Coming of Irrigations

Until the coming of irrigation, this scene remained about the same and there in is revealed the beauty of this early story-the faith of those pioneers in the possibilities of the country and their courage lead them to continue struggling to bring about those possibilities. A small canal was made in 1863 and from then until now it has been constantly improved until it is one of the best canals in the western territory. After irrigation began there was water underneath the ground and people began digging wells to reach it. This was done at the suggestion of Presedent Brigham Young who advised securing the services of a skillful water witch to locate the veins. Throughout all those early days, the inhabitants of the territory, encouraged by their church leaders, believed that someday not far distant, Provo Bench would be the site of a big and beautiful city. The proposed means of bringing such a vision into reality varied. First it was planned to make the place a center for the silk industry and everyone planted mulberry trees and started raising silkworms in special rooms of their houses. That bubble burst and residents settled down to farming. This was not without its hazards. Crop pests and water shortage took yearly tolls. One year the supply of flour ran out before more wheat was ready to be ground. Green wheat was used.

That year was remembered long after-ward as the year of green bread and molasses. Small fruits were raised at first and then larger fruits. It is generally known that the district can produce fruits of a better flavor than other fruit-growing districts. It suggests a means of meeting a too heavy competition.

### First School

The first school built was a community project. Logs were sledded down from the canyon and a one room house was built on the present site of the Spencer School. This house was school and church combined and served seven days of the week during the winter. There was three windows on the east and three on the west with a door in the south and a teacher's desk on the north. Benches served for desks. An isle went down the center of the room. When ever a student wished to leave his seat, everyone on the bench who were nearer he aisle had to get up and out into the aisle to let him out-and then do the same to let him back in. Boys sat on one side of the room and girls on the other and all eight grades were accomodated.

### Mice and Sermons

Mice in the building were numerous and sermons were never dull because of them. It was said they frequently ran up the pulpit and over the speaker's shoulders. Women's courage was measured by their ability to feel a mouse up their skirts and not scream. When the community had grown some what, two red brick rooms were added to the log structure. These rooms still form a part of the Spencer building. The earliest teachers were not required to be trained for their positions. Applicants met the Board of Education and submitted to an oral examination. Since none of the board had had more than the barest rudiments of an education the examinations had to be concerned with such questions as the proper way to dig a ditch, or some such problem. School attendance was extremely irregular and a matter of secondary importance to both parents and students. That attitude has had some what serious results because of its handgove until very recently.

### Church Met Problems

Amusements were home-made and of the kind that cost no money. Dancing and home dramatics were the outstanding forms. Church going was a big item in every one's life. In fact the two dominating influences in the community were the church and the irrigation company. Religion was the dictator of all that was done and the church organization fit the early day community needs perfectly. In fact the Mormon church organization was made to fit the community needs of a pioneering life which suggests to us that it should still organize to fit present-day community needs. In spite of the deep religious feeling there was a period of deep interest in spiritualism and all its supernatural phenomena. This type of thing in occupying less and less attention of the people who concern themselves now with bringing about their own miracles.

### Miracles Wrought

and that is what they have done-brought about a miracle. Whatever this district may become, it has served many of its inhabitants well as the improvements on it show. It still has possibilities for service and growth if it is treated well. It cannot serve more farming interests with its present water limitations-in fact, expansion in farming in this intermountain territory will be unprofitable no matter what provisions for water are made.

If Utah continues to grow, it must look to developing of industries, to better use of its present farm products, to its possibilities as an educational center, and to its great possibilities as tourist country with manufacturing that caters to it. There is a new and prosperous vision for Utah territory if people only catch it and work toward it.

### As it used to be between Pleasant Grove and Provo

Continuing our remembering of what used to be on the Provo Bench district, we came to a contrast between past and present that is extreme-our schools. Today we pride our on having some of the best in the State of Utah and go even further by saying that Utah ranks high with the other states of our country in educational achievements. This makes it doubly interesting to recall what the results were of the first cooperative efforts to give pioneer children the benefits of knowing their readin, ritin, and rithmetic.

### Our first schools

Provo Bench had itself cut off from Provo and made a school district of its own in about 1876. Some of the first teachers were Mr. Chalender, Della Green, Florence Rodgers, Irving Pratt, and about 1900 N. K. Nielson, Minnie Noble, Norma Young, Andrew Olsen, Mr. Bushman, Sadie Talmage, Hannabel Smith, Mrs Collins and Frank McGraw whose



father was a prominent hop raiser of Provo Bench. Mr. Nielsen organised the first eighth grade graduating class He also organized a dramatic company which furnished entertainment for a number of years. A little story is told of Hannable Smith, who left her school one night very vexed after a hard day of disciplining some of the grown young men of the eight grade. As she was driving in her buggy she came upon a cow lying in the middle of the road (now the state highway) placidly chewing her cud and bedding down for the night. Determined that she would not go around the cow Miss Smith called and scolded and drove her horse as close as she dared but the cow was not even annoyed. In a burst of temper, Miss Smith urged the horse on resolved to run over the cow and the cow decided not to risk the buggy's weight, too, and arose. The buggy tipped over; the horse ran away. Miss Smith walked home and arrived smiling.

#### No truent Officers

School attendance was very irregular. Pupils did not enter until after the fall work was done and they stopped as soon as the spring work begun. They were required to buy their own books and school materials for the school board had little funds. The first board was made up of Frank Carter, Newell Knight, Joseph Adams, James Loveless, and Amasa Mecham. Newell Knight was treasurer and had but \$780.00 to run the school with for the entire year. And, from these humble beginnings has grown a beautiful senior high school and an equally attractive junior high school and two grade schools.

Written by Samuel Cordner—transcribed as written by Anna Jean Backus—February 2000.